Not A Core Book!

Flying Circus

HORRORS OF THE HEIGHTS

An Expansion by

Erika Chappell

Flying Circus

HORRORS OF THE HEIGHTS

Credits

Writing, Design, and Art
Erika Rachael Chappell

Editors & Proofreaders
Kit Hohler, Calum McBain

Airplane Production
Arnd Koster, Calum McBain

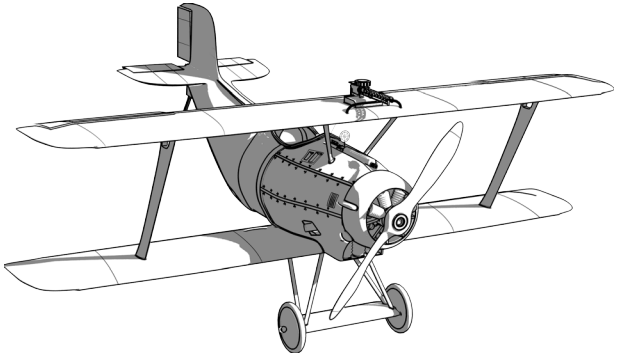
German Language Consultant
Fina Sophie Moser

Ecosystem Development
Ben Miller-Jacobson, Lansing Wei, Sam Miller

Font Listing

Balthazar, Madjoe, Koch Fette Deutsche Schrift

This is an expansion for the Flying Circus roleplaying game. In order to play, you will need the core game, which can be found on DriveThruRPG or Itch.io.



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Version 1.0

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Introduction

The Things Above

"There are jungles of the upper air, and there are worse things than tigers which inhabit them."

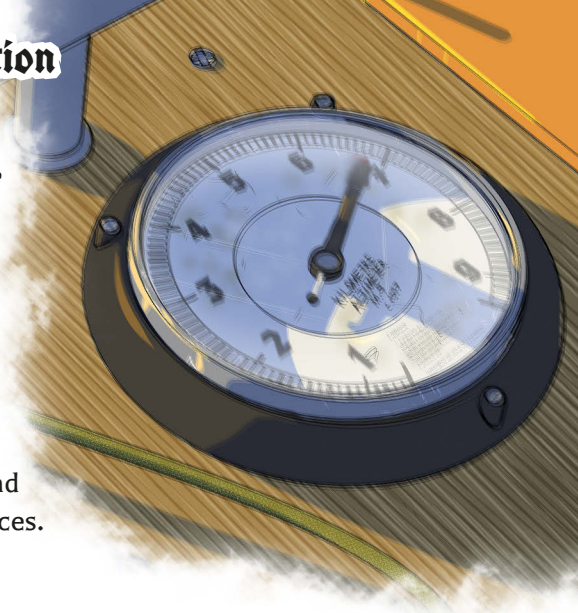
- Arthur Conan Doyle,
"The Horror of the Heights", 1913

Himmilgard is a land of a great many dangers, few which are well understood. Some are simple for humans to comprehend: a Grand Eagle will swoop in and tear apart your plane because it is hungry. Others are strange, but their boundaries are known: if you wish to avoid the Fae, don't stray into the Wild. But in the darkest forests, the deepest caves, and the open ocean are a myriad of dangerous creatures which exist at the level of rumours, half-remembered stories, and blurry photographs.

High up in the clouds, too, there are dangers.

As the combustion engine has grown more powerful, the aeroplane and airship swifter and more reliable, people have edged ever closer to this strange realm, ignorant of that which lurks above. For the open air is not as empty as it seems, and that which lurks at these great heights is inimical and alien to human life. While the shape of this threat is known to few, veteran pilots know better than to stray too far from the safety and certainty of solid earth.

Using this Book



Flying Circus: Horrors of the Heights is an expansion delving deeper into the strange things that lurk at high altitudes. It adds new player features and aircraft, but it is primarily focused on adding new high altitude mechanics, providing reasons for pilots to venture to greater heights, and creating Threats to lurk in those places.

Campaigns

This book is an optional addition to any campaign, and replaces certain simplified aspects of Threats from the core book with more complex and engaging versions. It also lets you adjust the tone of the game, running something more focused on exploration and bizarre horror as the players brave the unknown.

It is perfectly okay to have this book around and break it out when you need it, if play starts to stray to higher altitudes for whatever reason. It will be a useful resource for injecting character and excitement into that space, and veteran players may welcome the new complications.

Another way of using this book is to build a campaign around it directly, with the intent from the start being to go to high altitudes to explore or take speciality jobs. A one-shot or short campaign rocketing above the clouds allows for more careful control over the tone, especially if you want to take it in the direction of surreal horror.

Inspiration

As implied by the name, the primarily inspiration for this expansion was the 1913 Arthur Conan Doyle story *The Horror of the Heights*, about an aviator who goes to the dizzying altitude of 40,000 feet and discovers a strange and hostile ecosystem there.

Another inspiration is the alien world of Darwin IV from Wayne Barlowe's *Expedition*, which was drawn on to give the high altitude ecosystem a strange and otherworldly nature.

New Rules

Pushing the Limit

Most World War One aircraft couldn't climb much over five kilometres from the ground at most, and generally stayed below three kilometres in regular service. High altitudes are hostile: it is colder, the air is thinner, and control becomes increasingly difficult. At that time, there was little strategic reason to stray so high anyway.

In subsequence decades, advancements in pressurized cockpits, forced air induction, anti-aircraft guns, and bombsights saw aircraft pushing higher and higher in combat. None of that stuff really factors into *Flying Circus*, so if we're going to aspire to truly high altitudes, we'll need to get creative in both our reasons and our methods.

We'll also need better detail on how altitude affects planes and pilots, and for peripheral aspects like temperature and air density which can be incorporated into games even if they aren't staying to extreme altitudes.

This section will cover all the player-facing aspects of the expansion, the new gameplay mechanics and jobs that will drive players upward.

Altitude Effects

To flesh out these adventures, we're going to need slightly more detail in handling the altitude rules.

Altitude Refresher

Most campaigns won't really interact with the altitude rules in great detail, so the core book recommends ignoring it if it isn't critical. This book centres high altitudes, though, so a refresher for the sake of having the information in one place might be helpful.

This game measure altitude in meters, with each in-game point of Altitude representing 100 meters to the ground (and usually from sea level). The tens place of your Altitude position is your Altitude Factor (AF): if you are altitude 23, you are 2300m from the ground, and AF 2.

Every Altitude Factor past the first, you add 1 Stall Speed, representing the thinning air reducing lift. You lose -10% of your speed when you are outside your engine's Ideal Altitude Factor range, with an additional -10% per Altitude Factor away. This is the same above or below this value.

Your Climb stat is reduced by 1 for each 10% speed lost, to a minimum of 1, and any penalty at all reduces your Boost by 1, also to a minimum of 1.

To represent the effects of oxygen deprivation, pilots can take Stress as a hard move above 40 Altitude, and each Altitude Factor above that inflicts a -1 Ongoing penalty to crew. This can be negated with an oxygen mask or sealed, pressurized cockpit.

Aircraft find their flight ceiling when their Stall Speed meets their Top Speed. This is usually between 40 and 60 Altitude, unless they have special adaptations like forced air induction or disproportionately large wings.

Thinning Air

Some pilots describe the sensation of manoeuvring at high altitudes as 'skating', as with lowered air resistance the aircraft has difficulty finding purchase with its control surfaces.

Reduce aircraft Energy Loss by 1 at both 3 AF and 6 AF, to a minimum of 1. To represent reduced control authority, give a -1 Ongoing penalty to Evade Danger for every AF above 3.

Temperature

As you climb, the temperature drops considerably. Pilots already deal with bitter cold, but past a certain point it starts to get truly dangerous, and we need to start talking about keeping warm with more than passive measures like flying leathers.

Thus, to represent the effects more accurately than the rules in the core game, we introduce a temperature scale.

Frozen	Freezing	Cold	Warm	Hot

- At *Hot*, engines take a -2 Reliability penalty. Take +1 Flight Stress,
- At *Warm*, everything is normal.
- At *Cold*, batteries are limited to holding half their charges.
- At *Freezing*, unprotected characters are at Disadvantage to Eyeball, Wingwalk, fire turrets, or do anything that exposes them more directly to the airstream than they have to.
- At *Frozen*, unprotected characters can pass out as a hard move. Engines have +2 reliability. Batteries do not function unless the aircraft is heated by radiator loop.

By default, the ground is considered Warm, and the temperature drops by 1 band every 3 Altitude Factors (30, 60, 90). If it's winter, it's Cold on the ground, and if you're in a desert or a tropical summer, it'll be Hot.

If it is Freezing, aircraft leave a *contrail* behind them, making them easier to spot. This is a double-edged sword: neither you or your opponent can choose 'Act while they are unaware' as an Engage result.

Finally at Freezing altitudes, the following GM moves become available. These are best used by first signalling them, and then implementing them, rather than springing them on people directly as Hard Moves. Trying to stop them is more interesting than experiencing them.

- Aircraft wings ice up, causing a stall or spin.
- Goggles ice up, blinding the pilot.
- Thermal contraction causes 1d10 structure damage.
- Sluggish controls reduce Handling by 10.
- You fly into a foe's contrail and instantly ice up.

Extreme Conditions

Higher altitudes and different temperatures can cause pilots to encounter increasingly harsh conditions during flight.

Turbulence

Areas in the sky where bodies of air are moving in different directions create turbulence, disturbances in the air that can cause instability or loss of lift for an aircraft. While some turbulence is visible in cloud patterns, most is 'Clear Air Turbulence', also known as CAT or 'air pockets'.

The easiest way to represent turbulence is simply as an omnipresent GM move that can cost a plane Energy or put them into a Spin. Turbulence becomes more common at higher altitudes, above mountains, or at the transitions between temperature zones.

Winter Storms

Flying through snow is a difficult affair. While moving quickly, snowfall becomes just as miserable as rain, but it is also poses great danger in terms of visibility and icing.

Rainfall at Freezing temperatures become Winter Storms, inflicting 1 Stress and -2 to Air Patrol to those caught under the clouds. As an additional threat, make a 4-segment clock called 'Icing'. After each Air Patrol and at the end of each Combat, mark 1 on Icing. Each mark induces -1 Stability and -1 Max Speed.

Dust Storms

A dust storm is a low-level weather event that occurs in deserts, where wind whips up great qualities of sand. The dust will cover everything from the ground up to the Wind rating in Altitude, and flying into a dust storm will blind you, cause 1 Stress, and cause you to take double RPM.

Lightning

A lightning strike is a hard move the GM can use. It instantly fries Electrics and inflicts 1d10 damage. On a 10, a fire stars.

Though in real life lightning is usually sudden and unexpected, in Flying Circus there is always warning: static electricity, the smell of ozone, nearby strikes. If the pilot doesn't leave the dangerous area, they will get zapped!

Mountain Terrain

The Mountains of Himmilgard are just as much the Wild as the forests are, but the spirits that govern such bleak places are strange indeed. It is a realm of exiles and outcasts, of forgotten beasts, but you are just as likely to die from an icy fall or avalanche as to fall prey to the denizens.

Preparing to Travel

When you find yourself heading out into alpine areas (and, if you wish, into other harsh wilderness), you should make a list of everything you are carrying which could contribute to your survival. This list is your *Precautions.* Each pilot has their own list of them.

Each of your precautions give -1 to Alpine Hike from their weight and bulk, but +1 to Making Camp. You can acquire other precautions on location and leave them behind, but this could come with its own challenges.

Alpine Hike

When you hike through the mountains, choose as a group:

- *... the hard way,* each of you rolls+Daring, -Precautions.
- *... the long way,* each of you rolls+Hard, -Precautions.

The Hard Way, overcome 2 Trek. 16+, choose 1. 11-15, choose 2.

The Long Way, overcome 1 Trek. On an 11-15, choose 1.

- Difficult going slows you down or makes you late.
- You lose or leave behind something valuable or important.
- You're stuck on the mountain overnight.

Precautions can be expended to turn a Miss into a Partial.

The GM should always offer the two choices, and give them characterful descriptions. Don't just say 'the long way', tell the players about the winding mountain trail they have to move through. Don't just say 'the hard way', describe the soaring ice cliffs or dark mineshaft.

Altitude effects apply during Alpine Hikes the same way they would in the air. Characters will take stress and penalties at 40+ Altitude, as described on page 7, which oxygen tanks (page 16) can mitigate. Temperatures will also naturally drop, which is why most hikes will be in the snow.

Camping Out

If you're forced to stop for the night, that's when the real danger begins. Low oxygen levels, plummeting temperatures, and dangerous creatures all make such efforts increasingly dangerous for the unprepared, though thinking ahead can save a lot of hardship.

This move can also be used for non-alpine journeys out into the Wild.

Making Camp

When your group makes camp in the dangerous wilderness, one of you roll 2d10 +Precautions. Pool all the group's precautions together.

On a 20+, everything goes smoothly. 16+, each pilot must choose 1 to pass the time. 11-15, they must choose 2. If no options appeal to you and you still have picks left, wander away from the group.

- Pass the time with conversation (Start or participate in Get Real).
- Take out your frustration (Start or participate in a Brawl).
- Get a bit too close to share warmth (Get Intimate with someone.)

On a miss, nobody gets any rest as something goes terribly wrong.

Skiing

If your team has a set of skis, you'll have a lot of advantages for increasing your travel speed and reducing the exertion of long alpine journeys. Skiing is also a decent Vice for an alpine-inclined character, and many pilots appreciate the fact that a ski set will easily fit inside the hollow tail of their aircraft.

When travelling on snowy ground, skis double the number of Treks you cover. You can still choose to take the Long Way or the Hard Way and roll as normal. However, skis count as Precautions when you aren't on snow, giving a -1 penalty. They're not fun to carry around!

A sled won't help move you, but they will help move your equipment. Using a sled will half the Precaution penalty you take on Alpine Hike, so long as you're on appropriate ground like snow or ice. On less accommodating surfaces, it's just another Precaution to lug around.

Rescues in the Snow

If a person is incapacitated or otherwise won't move themselves, carrying them counts as 2 Precautions. A sled removes this penalty, though a sled can only carry one person at a time, and a sled carrying a person can't carry gear. Riders don't have to roll Alpine Hike!

Alpine Fighting

Whenever fighting occurs in alpine terrain, determine who has the high ground. If it isn't immediately narratively obvious, use the Engage move and modify it as needed: somebody always has the edge.

Those on the high ground roll Seize the Initiative with Advantage, and may roll an additional Hit on all Melee and thrown Personal Attacks, dropping the lowest. Those on the low ground have Disadvantage to Seize the Initiative, and roll +1 drop highest for Melee and thrown Personal Attacks.

As usual, NPCs don't roll Seize the Initiative. However, NPCs on the high ground will be much more likely to find solid cover, while those below are much more likely to be caught in the open.

Long Range Combat

Most of the ground combat in *Flying Circus* is typically assumed to happen in fairly confined environments or with short lines of sight. However, alpine terrain makes long-range fighting much more likely.

Every band past Knife gives a -1 penalty to Personal Attack. This penalty is doubled for bands beyond the Range of your weapon: firing a Close range weapon at Long range gives a -3 penalty (-1 for Close, -2 for Long).

Additionally, moving around during combat becomes much more important, hence the Combat Dash move. This move uses the same range bands as shooting: Melee -> Knife -> Close -> Long -> Extreme.

Combat Dash

When you move toward your foe, roll either +Daring or +Hard.

When you move away from your foe, roll either +Keen or +Calm.

When you try to seize the high ground, roll either +Hard or +Keen.

On a hit, you get one range band closer or farther and find cover again. 11-15, you fail to find cover before you are attacked. On a miss, not only do you fail to find cover, you draw a great deal of attention.

Having paths with cover such as trenches will negate the partial hit penalty, while suppressing fire from your comrades is an easy way to get Help. Skis don't help with Combat Dash, but snowshoes can grant Advantage on appropriate terrain.

Character Elements

To enhance high altitude gameplay, new character moves, abilities, and advancement options can be added to your game.

Witches - Eternal Fires

As a Personal Move, a Witch can learn to create an *eternal fire* in an engine or pulsejet. This requires sacrificing a Focus of Fire, and will affect all engines on an aircraft in one casting.

When a plane enchanted with Eternal Fires is started by the Witch, or by any magic user who is aware it has been enchanted, it gains the benefits. The aircraft's engine always counts as being at sea level, regardless of how high you actually go.

If the aircraft's engine stops at any time in the air, the fires are snuffed out, and will not relight until the plane lands, even if the engine restarts.

Survivor - Breath Easy

As a Personal Move, the Survivor can discover the filters which have allowed them to breath for so many years will still serve them reliably in the thinning air. While wearing their mask, the Survivor can always breath normally, no matter what altitude they go to.

This effect only works with a Survivor's mask, and only for those with the move.

Soldier - Alpine Constitution

As a Personal Move, the Soldier can call on high altitude training in extreme conditions, and channel their instructors at the task.

On the ground, the pilot ignores all effects from high altitude and adverse weather. Any other character in the group may also get this benefit, but either they or the Soldier must take 1 Stress, representing the harsh methods used to motivate them.

Conditioning

It is possible to become acclimatized to higher altitudes and operate more normally in low oxygen conditions through training. To represent this is a new move: it can be taken as a Mastery advance by anyone.

> **Altitude Conditioning**: You're used to high altitudes. You ignore Stress from altitudes above 40, and only start taking the ongoing Altitude penalties at Altitude 70.

If you wish, you may optionally include the following two special modifications to characters. These adjustments aren't mandatory: you can leave them out of your game, or your character can opt out, if you find the potential essentialism uncomfortable.

- Characters with the Skyborn Background (but *not all characters* with the Skyborn People card) automatically have *Altitude Conditioning*: living in the convoys necessarily means living at high altitude.
- Fischervolk (*regardless* of Background) count the Temperatures below Warm as one step warmer for personal effects: the blessing of the Dark Gods allows them to swim in freezing water. They start suffering the effects of oxygen deprivation 1 AF lower (4AF), owing to their gills making their respiratory system more delicate.
- Both Fischervolk and characters wearing gas protection can suffer heat stroke at Hot temperatures, causing them to black out as a Hard Move, just like Frozen temperatures. Additionally, this doubles the Flight Stress penalty from Hot temperatures to +2 from +1.

Equipment

Here's some equipment that might be handy at high altitudes, both in the cockpit and on foot.

Heated Flight Suit 3þ

Powered by a battery pack sewn into a pocket, this flight suit is run through with electrical heating elements, keeping the wearer warm even in the most adverse conditions... usually.

Renders the user immune to low temperature effects. Lasts two hours, or indefinitely if planes have Electrics. Can short out as a hard move.

Oxygen Tank 3þ

A pressurized bottle of oxygen attached to a face mask, worn on the back or hip. Handy, but bulky and awkward.

Renders the user immune to altitude effects from low oxygen. Lasts eight hours, but can be refilled on the ground. Cannot be worn with a parachute.

Emergency O2 Tank 1þ

A small can, a hose, and a mask. When the tab is pulled, the chemicals inside mix, producing oxygen for a short period.

Renders the user immune to altitude effects from oxygen. Lasts an hour (about a short patrol). One-use. Players can carry more than one.

Luftane Escape System 5þ

Originally invented to allow downed pilots to be picked up from the Wild without having to land, pilots have found all kinds of useful applications.

When activated, the pilot using it will be pulled out of their plane and shoot upward (in combat, 3 Altitude Bands whenever they act). The balloon can be collapsed and reused, but it is one use per flight.

New Weapons

If you're going to be fighting in mountainous terrain, you'll need weapons suited to the combat there. Combat in the mountains tends to happen either at very long or very short range, with very little in between!

Sniper Rifle 3þ

The straightest-shooting rifles of a production batch would be converted to marksmen rifles with telescopic scopes, perfect for long range combat.

Hits	1	Damage	2	AP	1	Range	Extreme
Manual, roll +Calm to make a Personal Attack from ambush.							

Straight Pull/Lever Action Rifle 1þ

These weapons have the advantage of faster actions than their more traditional cousins, but consequently more temperamental actions. This can be a problem for pilots who don't always remember to clean them.

Hits	1d2	Damage	2	AP	1	Range	Extreme
Manual, Unreliable (Unless you are a Soldier or Believer)							

Double Machine Pistol 4þ

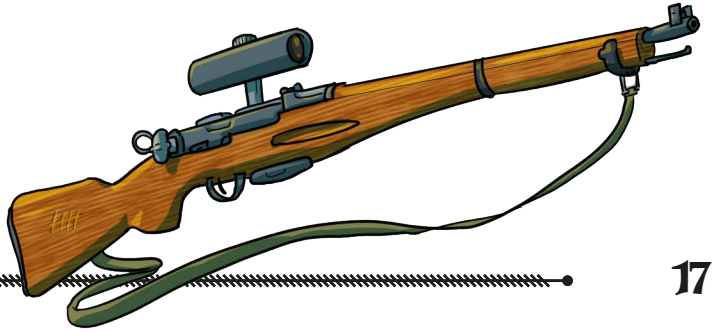
A strange weapon used by Macchi mountain troops, this weapon's extreme rate of fire at over 900 rounds a minute makes it deadly and impractical in equal measure.

Hits	5 (8)	Damage	1	AP	0	Range	Knife
Rapid Fire, Unreliable, Reload							

Ice Axe 2þ

A common tool for mountain climbers and alpine soldiers alike, in an emergency these make excellent heavy melee weapons.

Hits	2	Damage	2	AP	2	Range	Melee
One-Handed, gives +1 to Alpine Hike when ascending.							



Alpine Gear

If you're going out into the mountains, you have to make sure you have the right gear for it. A bit of planning will save you a lot of pain, though we all know pilots rarely think that far ahead!

All this gear is cheap, but needs to be found in preparation for a mission using Get Stuff. If you're not in a mountain town, take Disadvantage.

Skis — Scrip

People in Himmilgard have been skiing since ancient times, making it (along with river rafts) the only transportation technology older than flight. Prewar, it had also began to become a recreational activity.

Allows the user to use the Skiing action when going downhill, but counts as a Precaution when going uphill (ie, gives a -1.)

Climbing Rope — Scrip

If you're going mountain climbing, a long length of rope is vital. Plus, any adventurer knows that 15.24m lengths of rope are nearly as important as 3.048m long wooden poles.

Hold 1. Spend the hold to give Advantage to Alpine Hike, or to reroll the extra d10 when Helping another character with Alpine Hike.

Crampons/Snowshoes — Scrip

These footwear attachments greatly reduce the effort and danger of climbing and moving in deep snow, both common in alpine environments.

Gives +3 to Alpine Hike, mutually exclusive with skis. Crampons apply to the Hard Way, Snowshoes to the Long Way.

Sample Precautions

The following would all count as precautions for making camp. Remember, not all of these are things you take with you, they might be items you discover or create at the camp site.

- Shelter halves or tents.
- Sleeping bags.
- Portable stove.
- Rations.
- Firewood.
- An axe.
- Water purifying tablets.
- A cave.
- A spooky backwood cabin.
- Fresh water.

Aircraft Modifications

If you want to get to high altitude, but you don't want to break out the engineering tools to swap a supercharger in, here's some options.

Oxidized Fuel — Scrip

A Fokker invention refined post-war as the Branston Process, luftane enriched fuel allows operation above an engine's rated ceiling. Side effects include sickly green exhaust and stripping the finish off cylinders.

Can be loaded into an aircraft before a mission instead of regular fuel. Expands your Ideal Altitude Factors by +3, added to the top of the range. Whenever you generate RPM, generate +1 RPM.

High Altitude Instruments — 2♭

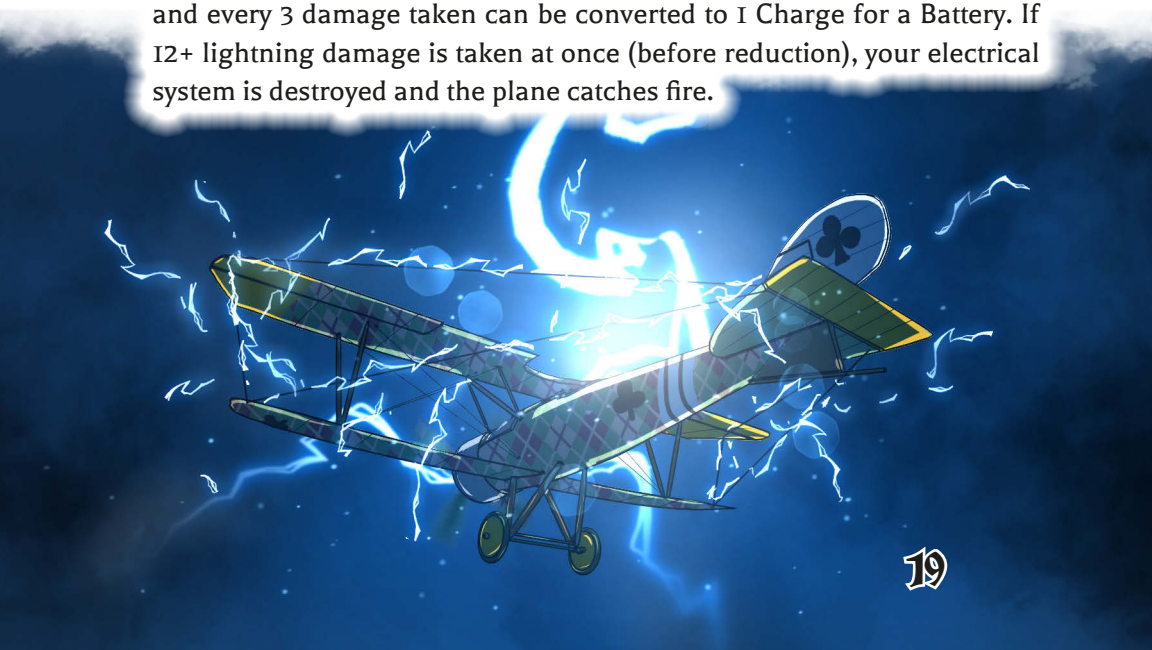
The instruments of most aircraft are designed for just above sea level, growing more inaccurate the farther up you go. These ones are the opposite: useless on the ground, but very precise above the clouds.

Once per routine, while above 30 Altitude, you can check your high altitude instruments for a more accurate reading. This allows you to shift altitude up or down up to 5. This does not actually move you: everyone and everything else around you adjusts to this 'new' altitude as well.

Lightning Loop — 2♭

Through costly trial and error, people have worked out that this lightweight copper loop can help protect against the lightning strikes.

Halves damage taken from electrical weapons such as Lightning Arcs, and every 3 damage taken can be converted to 1 Charge for a Battery. If 12+ lightning damage is taken at once (before reduction), your electrical system is destroyed and the plane catches fire.



High Altitude Missions

All these rules mean nothing if there aren't reasons for people to brave high altitudes and alpine environments in the first place. Special missions or conditions will be needed to draw people high above the earth.

Mission Seeds

The simplest way to get people to climb higher is to give them a job built around it. It's a bit obvious and clunky, but everyone will know what to expect and can plan accordingly.

- Something keeps taking a scientist's high altitude weather balloons. Be a dear and check on it, will you?
- A nearby warlord has been sending spying flights over the town at extreme altitudes, and the people are tired of being watched. Only problem is, it's a super-specialized high altitude plane.
    - Worse: the planes are bombers now.
- Most missions where whalers are the target will naturally climb to extreme altitudes.
- Airships playing things safe often take high mountain passes that aeroplanes can't follow them through, but it may be the only place you can hit them for your mission.
- A scientist or industrialist is willing to pay top dollar for the rare materials found in some high altitude wildlife, so you go up for the bounty. Make sure to track where the carcasses land!
- A Leviathan Machine that threatens the region retreats to high altitudes to repair between missions. It's more vulnerable while it's there, but you have to be able to get there.
- A crashed transport airship which was carrying machine tools for the Ritter factories from the west coast up to Macchi has been found high in the mountains. Whoever retrieves them would be very rich indeed, but now everyone (including warlords and/or the Goths) are in a scramble for them.
- An expedition wants you to attach a radio beacon to an old Sky Whale so they can follow it back to its graveyard when it dies.
- There's an old ghost airship drifting high above the region. Maybe the town wants it brought down gently to loot it, or wants you to board it for something. There might be multiple factions gunning for it, and the possibility of a spectral crew...

Complications

Rather than having missions explicitly built around high altitudes, you could also use complications in regular mission types draw people to high altitudes or throw a wrench into their ground game.

- The target in a raid mission is nestled behind many anti-air guns, but the team learns that if they take a high mountain pass at 45 altitude, they can bypass the defences.
- The pirates you'll need to get past have dangerous pulsejet fighters, but a local engineer says their engines will fail if the air is too thin.
- When the target of the mission is spotted, they start climbing like mad to escape, leading the players higher and higher.
- The mission just happens to takes place over a mountain range: the 'ground' starts at Altitude 20 or more.
- As you approach the dead city, the gas is obviously billowing up far higher than expected.
- The weather and wind at low altitude is terrible today, but should be clear if you get above the clouds.
- When a pilot goes down in the high mountains, they have to trek across the peak to a plateau on the other side: there's nowhere else safe to land. The other characters can help by dropping flares and strafing anything that threatens them.
- The people of this town ski, which means adventurous characters are just one missed Vice roll away from taking a tumble, going down the wrong path, and getting lost. Night is closing in: take shelter in the spooky cabin. But there's only one bed?

New Threats

Life in the Clouds

In the world of *Flying Circus*, there exists complex life at high altitude which can be a threat to those below. Many of these creatures are rare and little more than myth to the majority of people, just shifting dots in the sky or flashing lights in the night.

Pilots, however, will soon realize these creatures are very real, as are the dangers they represent. Some simply attack those humans unwise enough to stray into their realm, while others may have more complex and sinister motives. The life at high altitude is no less lethal than the thinning air, clinging chill, or inevitable pull of gravity.

Despite this risk, many of these creatures come with the promise of great wealth for those who can kill or capture them. From exotic materials in their biology to the scientific curiosity of those who might want to study them, the pursuit of high altitude life is well worth the risk to many.

After all, whalers may be regarded as the lowest of the low, but they're still rich. Maybe they've got the right idea?

The Horrors

Horrors of the Heights wants to present its high altitude threats not merely as targets which you can find if you raise your Altitude enough, but as, well, horrors: things to be feared.

Home Team Advantage

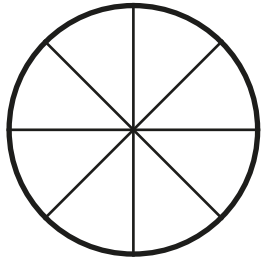
When at high altitude and facing a Horror, the players *always* lose their Engage roll. There's no need to even touch the dice. GMs should take particular care that players never have altitude advantage at the start of the fight: the Horrors are always something *above.*

The only exception to this is if the players do enough research, preparation, and scouting beforehand to fully comprehend what they are attacking. In this case, they may have a chance to put the enemy on the back foot.

Always a Bigger Fish

There's not a lot of life up there, and all of it can move very fast when motivated. Creatures of the clouds have to take any chance they can to swoop in and get prey when it presents itself, so any battle at high altitude will attract apex predators like moths to a flame.

When players get in a fight above 40 altitude, set up an 8 segment clock and label it Bigger Fish. This clock should be visible to everyone: you know it's coming.



Whenever a player misses 2d10 roll (rolling less than 11), roll 1d10. If the roll is higher than the number of filled segments, fill 1 segment.

If the roll is equal or lower than the filled segments, a new Threat, more dangerous than the last, arrives from nowhere, striking down one of the current Threats. The clock then resets: there's always a bigger fish.

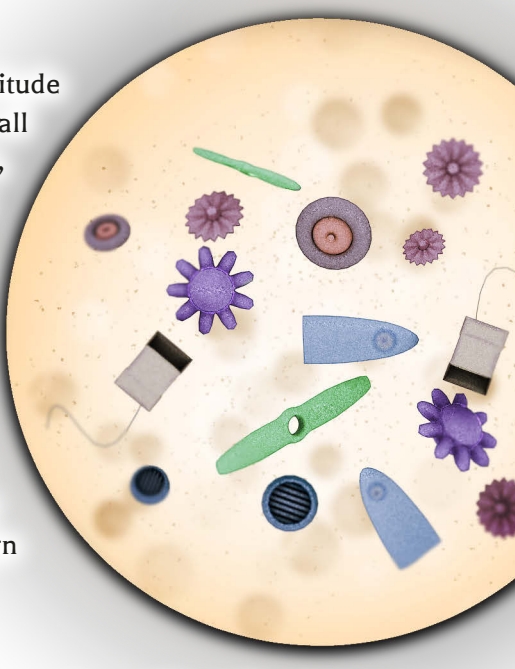
Bragging Rights

The horrors listed here are more than just regular creatures, they are terrifying legendary beasts. Every Horror killed which you can in some way confirm (through finding bodies or taking pictures) earns 2 Victories, regardless of your Mastery.

Small Life

Not everything at high altitude is a dangerous predator. Still, learning about these creatures is vital for high-altitude pilots, as their presence is often a prelude to oncoming danger.

Aeroplankton



Supporting all the other life at high altitude is aeroplankton, the generic name for all manner of bacteria, fungi, protists, algae, mosses, pollen, spores, seeds, and even tiny insects that are lofted into the air by a variety of mechanisms. Filter feeders take advantage of these tiny floating critters to survive at high altitudes.

While aeroplankton is mostly below the notice of human pilots, especially dense concentrations sometimes appear as hazy 'snow' at high altitude, which is a good sign other life will be about.

Cloud Weeds

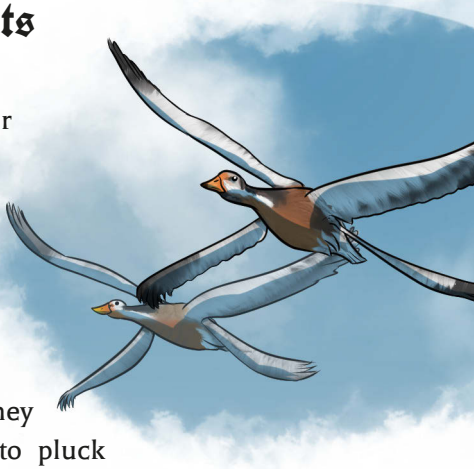
Though their name suggests a plant, cloud weeds are ultimately closer to coral of the ocean shallows. These creatures consist of small, wispy polyps which congregate inside the highest clouds, forming delicate spun ice scaffolds and filtering aeroplankton from the jetstream.

Cloud weeds are so insubstantial that, much of the time, pilots never notice them. Flying through a cloud, their greasy remains are indistinguishable from the moisture that builds up along aircraft and runs off windshields. However, very large groves of cloud weeds can build a considerable static charge, which they use to draw more plankton into their cloud. More than one plane has found its electrical systems suddenly disabled or leaking fuel ignited by flying into a particularly dense cloud of the creatures.

Cloud weeds are considered a relative of the cloud jellies, and they form the base of the diet of many of the smaller predators.

Birds

Many birds routinely fly as high as four kilometres above the Earth, especially when making migration flights, but few stay there long. However, some species are well adapted to high altitude life.



High-altitude adapted birds often resemble small albatrosses, with very long wingspans relative to their body size. They often have astonishingly good eyesight to pluck floating insects from their air. Following high altitude birds riding the morning thermals is one of the best ways to find other high altitude life.

Rumble Bees

One of the most bizarre creatures of high altitude are the rumble bees, insects who fly on organic, methane-burning pulsejet engines. They are sometimes called 'ghost tracers', because of a group of them moving together often resembles the smokey trails of a machine gun burst.

Rumble bees live as parasites and scavengers, feeding on live and dead cloud jellies and converting the wispy stuff of their bodies into both jet fuel and a form of luftane. Rumble Bees live in small hives of up to fifty individuals, spun from ice and cloud weed, and containing luftane chambers to remain at altitude. Some scientists theorize that they can even manipulate the shape of these chambers to steer the hive about the sky like a hot air balloon.

Rumble bees are tasty treats for many mid-sized hunters given their high energy metabolism, so if you see ghost tracers streaking across the sky, you can bet they are running from something interesting.

Cloud Jellies

Probably the most common form of life in the air are Cloud Jellies. Exactly where they come from and how their life cycle works is unknown. They bear little resemblance to most terrestrial life, or even to similar-looking aquatic creatures. It is known that a great many of them are dangerous to those who stray into their realms.

Cloud jellies, as their name implies, congregate inside clouds. Their bodies blend seamlessly with the water vapour, giving them near perfect camouflage, and they emerge only to feed.

The flesh of the cloud jellies are woven from a thin, translucent lipid and then stiffened with an electromagnetic charge. The result is a creature which, in life, is strong enough to pull an airplane out of the sky, but upon death will dissipate on the wind with all the structural integrity of tissue paper. This makes studying cloud jellies incredibly difficult.

Killing a cloud jelly is much more difficult than one would think. Their bodies have no particular weak points, nor do they bleed. The electrical charge animating them must be disrupted before they will dissipate.

Grazers

The majority of cloud jellies are grazers, which survive on a combination of filter feeding and preying on cloud weeds. Though not herbivores, they aren't far removed in behaviour or position on the food chain.

Grazers are sometimes attracted to the disturbed air of a formation of flying planes, and will reach down to investigate.

Cloud Grazer — Air Threat

Out of the cloud bank comes a misty white tentacle, reaching blindly for one of the planes. It is merely curious, but that is cold comfort to any pilot who it touches.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
10 - 10 - 0	30	50
x2 Harpoon Guns. Cannot be Crit. Will flee if injured.		

Hunters

Some jellies feed on birds, sky screamers, and anything else unlucky enough to get close. Hunters are smaller than grazers, and are ambush predators, descending or ascending quickly through cloud banks to snatch prey and dissolve them with electrical arcs.

Cloud Hunter — Air Threat

A long tendril emerges from the banks of cloud, seemingly made of the same stuff but terrifyingly solid. Then another, and then a beak, blindly snapping with arcs of static charge.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
10 - 10 - 0	50	35
Cannot be Crit. x3 Harpoon Guns. Harpooned targets take 1d10 damage from lightning whenever they act.		

Cloud Kraken

There are tales of creatures in the sky so large that they have moved beyond using clouds as cover. Instead, their massive bodies themselves mimic the clouds. Such a creature could not be defeated by conventional weapons, and could even prove a threat to things on the ground. Fortunately, these are just rumours. Right?

Sky Screamers

Among the most terrifying creatures known to pilots are the predatory hunters known as the sky screamers. Indiscriminate hunters of large birds, jellies, and pilots alike, sky screamers appear to be newcomers to Himmilgard, with the first recorded descriptions of the beasts appearing a scant four hundred years ago.

The structure of their methane-burning engine pods is distinct from anything seen in nature, even from the natural pulsejets of the rumble bee. Inside is a free-turning turbine of bone and gristle, compressing the air drawn into its combustion chamber. Though evolution has taken animals through a great many forms, in none of them is seen the wheel and axle. Exactly how such an adaptation could come to be is a puzzle.

Combined with their eyeless sight, their singing on radio waves, and their strange body plan, Sky Screamers are unlike any other life on Earth, closer to dragons or aeroplanes than natural being. The only thing more frightening than a town's radio picking up their lament is when the signal stops as the screamer enters into a lethal power dive.

Pods

Sky Screamers most commonly appear in pods of about a half a dozen animals, some with their young attached parasite-like to their parents. Pods hunt with one minding the young while the rest chase down prey. Their primary food is cloud jellies, from which they derive fuel, but they won't pass up any other prey they come across.

Sky Screamer (Pod) — Air Threat

Diving from the clouds, a sky screamer has an methane-burning jet engine and a horn for impaling prey, be it animal or aeroplane.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
25 - 15 - 9	85	12
Spike (3d10 melee). Takes triple damage if lit on fire.		

Roamers

The Sky Screamers display considerable sexual dimorphism, with the solitary males growing larger and faster than the more social females. Roamers are nearly suicidally aggressive, and will attack anything that flies if they think they can get a meal out of them. This quickly whittles their numbers down to only the largest and toughest.

Sky Screamer (Roamer) — Air Threat

Appearing out of nowhere, this terrifying creature tears through the sky in a suicidal power dive toward the juiciest target.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
28 - 18 - 12	78	16
Spike (3d10 melee), Wing Blades, Fliegerflammenwerfer Armoured Skin 1. Takes triple damage if lit on fire.		

Razor Swarms

A relative of the larger Screamers, Razors fly in large swarms of dozens of tiny predatory creatures. When not hunting, razor swarms often save energy by clinging to the undersides of airships to rest.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
17 - 14 - 5	90	6-20
On collision, inflicts damage equal to Health. Takes damage equal to Hits inflicted: damage has no effect.		

Lightning Sprites

Lightning Sprites were at one time thought to be related to cloud jellies, but while they share some features further research makes the connection more and more tenuous.

Indeed, it's not clear that lightning sprites are alive in the traditional sense. There doesn't appear to be anything to them except a pattern of electricity, arcing endlessly in defiance of all known physics. These creatures radiate out from clouds, reaching across the sky to swat down anything that crosses their path.

The smallest sprites are just a few dozen meters tall, but larger ones have been seen arcing across the entire sky. Sprites are sometimes seen alone, but often in dozens or even hundreds, looming high above the landscape. What brings these creatures together, seemingly out of nowhere, and where they go when dismissed is a mystery.

The worst part is that lightning sprites aren't simply mindless beasts. Pilots have reported being penned in by multiple sprites working in concert, forcing them into endless turns to corner them.

Exactly what these creatures want with humans is unknown.

Lightning Sprite — Air Threat

Sparking into existence as a halo of light and flickering electricity, the lightning sprite looms before you. A non-stop crackling howl of thunder follows its every movement as it reaches toward you.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
---	80	12
Lightning Arc (Special) Invulnerable to harm by conventional means.		

The Lightning Sprite cannot move conventionally, but it can fade out of existence and reemerge in order to follow players. It can only manifest where there are clouds, so fleeing to a patch of clear sky will protect you. Sprites also generally do not follow targets down below 30 Altitude.

The sprite has a pool of 4d10 each time it attacks. The Sprite inflicts that much damage toward the target(s) of its choice: spreading the dice out over multiple targets. At Knife range, the Sprite does double damage.

Lightning can be dodged with a 16+ on a Keen Dogfight! against the Sprite, cannot crit, and is otherwise not treated as an attack.

Hunting Lightning Sprites

Lightning Sprites are immune to the majority of weaponry: bullets fly through with minimum disruption to their arcs, heat rays find no purchase, and even bursting shells do little more than temporarily disorienting them.

Conventional weapons cannot affect the Health of a Sprite, and Lightning Arcs increase their Health instead of reducing it. However, every 10 points of Damage on a Sprite will remove one of its attack dice, reducing its lethal potential. It always has a minimum of 1d10 for Attack.

The only attack which can harm sprites is attacking with electromagnetic (EM) rounds. The rarity and expense of these speciality rounds makes this very difficult. A defeated Lightning Sprite will burst with a thunderclap and usually result in an immediate storm from the agitated clouds.

Multiple sprites may merge together, combining their health and attack dice totals. Each merged sprite after the first adds only +1d10 attack and +6 Health to the resulting creature.

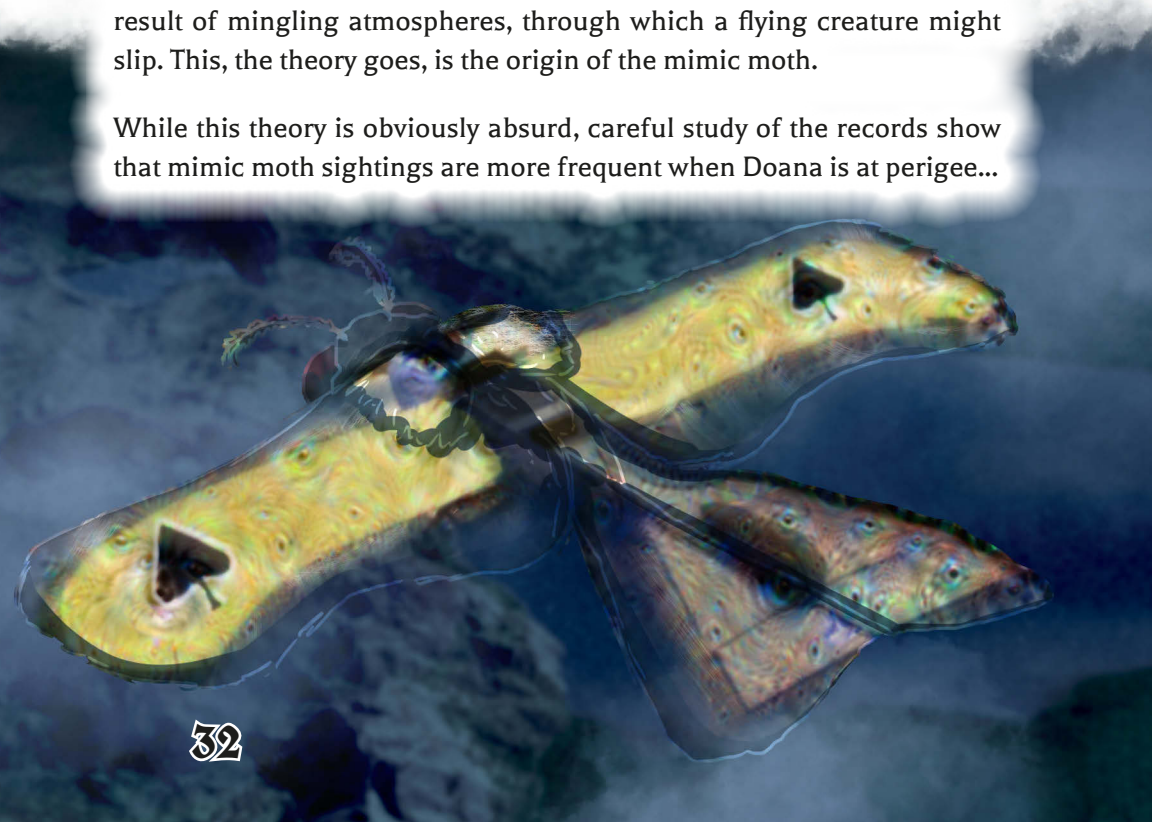
Mimic Moths

Of all the strange creatures which wander the sky, the mimic moth is one of the most bizarre, with the ability to disguise itself as other creatures. The first mimic moths were discovered by early 16th century whalers, having taken on the guise of small sky-whales. From a distance, the illusion was very convincing. However, no crew that ever took a mimic moth alive survived the ordeal, their accounts known only through other members of the fleets who watched their comrades turn on each other.

Since the end of the Great War, mimic moths have most often taken the form not of other flying animals, but of aircraft. Great flights of mimic moths are sometimes seen bearing the roundels of Old World nations, buzzing in perfect formation. Mimic Moths have never been seen on the ground, but surely they must land, given that they have legs, and the bulk of their body is simply too great to maintain indefinite flight.

There are those who theorize that the Mimic Moth is so strange because it very much is not of this world. The closest of the three moons, the green moon of Doana, follows an unusual orbit which takes it from the farthest of the Earth's satellites to the closest every forty-five days. When the Doana is closest, the sky lights up with aurora which some speculate is the result of mingling atmospheres, through which a flying creature might slip. This, the theory goes, is the origin of the mimic moth.

While this theory is obviously absurd, careful study of the records show that mimic moth sightings are more frequent when Doana is at perigee...



Mimic Moth — Air Threat

What you thought was a slow-moving aircraft ripe for the picking has turned out to be so much stranger, some sort of creature taking the shape of an aircraft. The longer you stare into the strange, shifting patterns of its wings, the more entrancing you find them...

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
14 - 10 - 4	80	20
Hypnotic Patterns		

Hypnotic Patterns

As you get closer to a Mimic Moth, it begins to exert control over the mind of observers. The patterns of the moth drive observers to a maniac fury, extolling them to violence against their comrades. Resisting is difficult, and gets harder with exposure and proximity.

Hypnotic Patterns

Whenever you approach a Mimic Moth, roll+ your lowest stat. Take -1 if you are at Close range, -2 at Knife range.

On a 16+, you resist. On an 11-15, gain 1 hold. On a miss, gain 3 holds.

You have an ongoing penalty to both Hypnotic Patterns and Open Fire against all mimic moths, equal to your holds. If you attack one of your comrades, spend all the holds.

Holds do not naturally fade.

Just as with the indoctrination of dragons, mimic moths can't actually force players to do anything. However, giving in and then dealing with all the fallout in character can be a great story. As a good general rule, don't attack other player characters unless their player agrees out of character.

Another thing to remember, though, is that the tension of having Hypnotic Pattern holds on your character sheet is just as good as actually playing out the attack.

Even if you never actually harm anyone, you and everyone else now has the potential of betrayal and violence hanging over their heads.

Air Leviathans

Leviathans come in a great variety of forms, with many different sorts of locomotion. They can be giant tanks, huge walkers, enormous automated battleships, or cannons that can shoot hundreds of miles.

Many of the most dangerous were high flying aircraft and airships which were deployed in the dying days of the Great War, carrying bombs, cannons, and poison gas across the continent. Powered by esoteric methods and without a living, breathing crew, these machines were often programmed to fly at impossible heights to protect themselves, and there some of them remain to this day: lurking, silent, waiting for new orders.

Designing an Air Leviathan

The critical decision at the heart of a leviathan, especially an air leviathan, is if it is a threat on its own, or if somebody has hijacked it and are sticking around to protect it from aircraft.

In the former case, the leviathan should be well armed with turrets, capable of launching escort planes, or both. In the latter, the hijacking force can provide support during an attack, so the leviathan should be tough or difficult to stop, but not necessarily deadly.

Remember, the most important part of a Leviathan's design is that they are a campaign arc in and of themselves. Destroying them should be a difficult multi-step process that involves research, training, special purchases, and scouting, and the reward should be proportional.

Vormachtstellung

Once at the centre of the Gotha Empire's post-war plans for domination over the continent, the *Vormachtstellung* was designed to be able to crush a rebellion on its own in a matter of hours. The interior of this enormous flying wing consist of massive automated production lines, allowing the machine to create endless waves of drone aircraft and artillery barrages.

The machine was emblematic of the ambition and misplaced priorities of the late Gotha Empire, with its decade-long production and constant delays. There are those who estimate the war in Macchi would have ended four months earlier had the industrial effort put into the titan been redirected to conventional weapon production.

Vormachtstellung was not quite finished before the end of the war, and never properly crewed. Rumour has it that the autopilot was activated in a move of desperation and the machine took off and disappeared into the night sky, to be seen a half-dozen times in the following decades. Exactly what circumstances cause it to decide a section of the countryside is rebellious is unknown, but the results are always terrifying to behold.

Leviathan *Vormachtstellung*

- Flyer, 1 Altitude Band tall. Flies at speed 10.
- Main Weapons: Repeating Heavy Cannons
- Secondary Weapons: Flak Barrage, underside cannons
- Can launch never-ending waves of Autotriplanes & Autostrikes.
- Weakness 1: When it launches aircraft, the hangar doors open, exposing the winches (5HP). If destroyed, the doors lock open.
- Weakness 2: Luftane cells will explode if they take 20 damage, taking double from incendiary. Has Armoured Skin 4 from the outside, but it has no armour inside the hangar.
- If bombed, the luftane cells have 6 Segments, Hardness 14+, Soak 2, with vulnerability to Armour Piercing.

Autotriplane Profile

- Speed: 14/12/4
- Handling: 125
- Health: 21
- x4 SMG

Autostrike Profile

- Speed: 14/11/8
- Handling: 100/90
- Health: 26
- x1 MG, Bombs

L-01 "Sheeta"

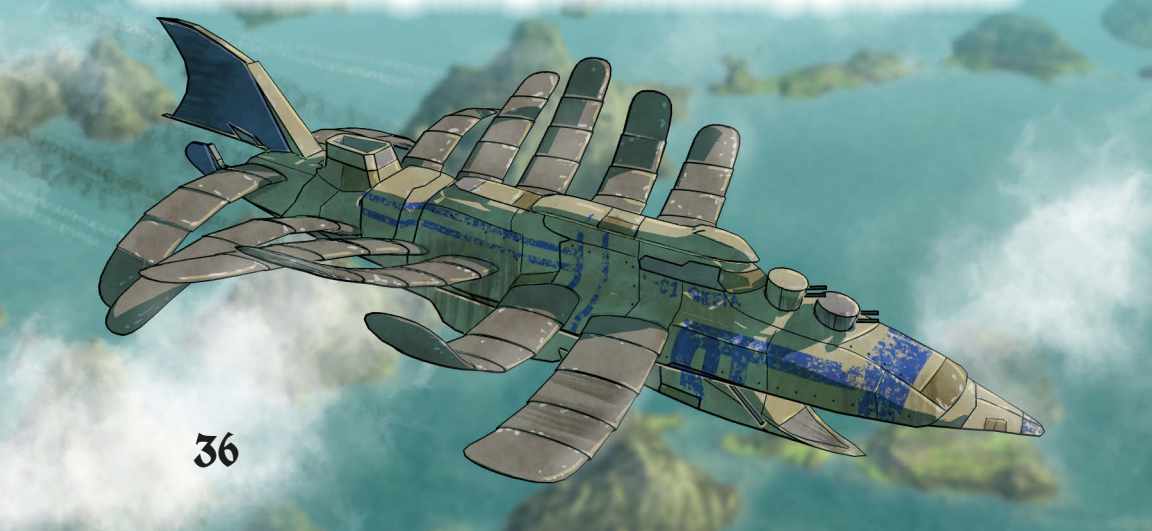
Patterned after Gotha LZ-class Leviathans and named in transliterated reference to Skyborn mythology, L-01 *Sheeta* was Sopwith's sole Leviathan, built as a deterrent after their defeat in Macchi. In a grim irony, it was used against occupied cities in Sopwith's former allies before disappearing.

Sheeta is heavily armoured and both capable of high altitude flight and diving under the ocean to protect itself. Within its automated halls are great vats for synthesizing chemical agents: the machine could raze a city by itself. While not exceptionally well defended, in the wrong hands it could cause considerable destruction. It is not known who currently controls it: it may be under the control of clockwerks, the Sopwith Expeditionary Force, pirates, or simply be wandering feral.

Sheeta is controlled through a small blue stone, resembling those which might be found aboard a Flying Fortress, connected to the esoteric artefacts at the centre of the machine. Capturing this stone would grant the user greater power, and make them a target for every wannabe tyrant on the continent.

Leviathan *Sheeta*

- Flyer, 1 Altitude Band tall. Flies at speed 14.
- Main Weapons: Heavy Flak Barrage, gas dispensers.
- Weakness 1: Sensor bulb at nose (18HP) which will disable guns.
- Weakness 2: Access hatch at rear (30HP, Armoured Skin 2).
- Weakness 3: A party can land and destroy the machine with explosives, or the hatch can be bombed (4 Segment, Hardness 16+).
- Special Weakness: Can be commanded with its control stone. The stone has an uncanny tendency to be lost before the players can use it.



Castle Sturmherz

Capable of creating a localized hurricane with the turbine at its core, Castle Sturmherz was intended to be the superweapon which would save Macchi from their increasingly inevitable defeat. It was never properly finished, but its main weapon and guidance systems were made operational the day before the surrender was signed. Meant to be scrapped to prevent it from falling into the hands of Macchi's foes, it was instead set loose, and was last seen floating north.

Being incomplete, the machine is essentially just a floating mass of girders, gantries, working machinery, and luftane cells, all slowly decaying. Its slow collapse and uneven balance drives the machine on a meandering, random course across the world, the source of freak hurricanes.

If somebody got their hands on the Castle and piloted it toward inhabited land, the devastation would be considerable. Stopping it would not be hard, providing whatever aircraft you could fly through the storm could defeat the forces of whoever seized it.

Leviathan Sturmherz

- Flyer, 5 Altitude Bands tall. Flies at speed 4 at altitude 45.
- Surrounded at all times by a hurricane (Speed 5 Winds).
- Inhabits the eye of the storm (no wind).
- Flying through the machine requires constant Evade Danger.
- Weakness: Has 10 Luftane Cells (20HP). If 7 are destroyed, it will sink from the sky.
- Weakness: Open control station in the center.

Flying Fortresses

Among airship pilots, coastal fishermen, and the crew of the old Macchi Seeheer, there are persistent myths of vast floating castles in the skies, looming over the seas at the edge of Himmilgard. Usually far from shore, but sometimes straying closer, especially during great battles.

According to these myths, the fortresses will attack anyone who gets into range, putting up progressively greater defences as you close. Further, people claim that the fortresses themselves are awash in great wealth and strange technology, but seeing as none are supposed to be able to survive the approach, this is surely conjecture.

Sometimes, on exceptionally clear days, if you stand at the coast and scan the horizon, you can just make out the blurry shape of one of these great bastions. Waiting.

The Approach

Every Flying Fortress has three lines of defences that a prospective raider must breach before they can gain access to its treasures.

The first is its long range artillery guns, which take the form of a barrage of very heavy flak (page 183) which no airship can survive. If the attackers survive the volley, the second line is the Interceptor squadrons.

Fortress Interceptors — Air Threat

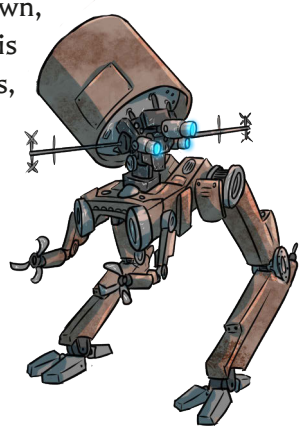
This autonomous machine appears in a perfect formation with its fellows, propelled on small jets. Impossibly, it is seeming made of the same ceramics as the base which disgorged it. Radios squeal in their presence.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
25 - 15 - 9	90	24
x2 HMG, 10 mass bombs. Suffers double Crits due to age.		

If the interceptors are bypassed or outrun, the final line of defence is the small gun turrets. These consist of a dozen turrets spaced out around the castle, each equivalent to a pair of Light Repeating Cannons. At least three of these guns must be taken out to enable a landing.

The Guardians

When the pilots land, they find a deserted, overgrown, and worn down fortress, likely centuries old. It is covered in decorations, murals, and inscriptions, many of them faded, but Skyborn characters may recognize some of the symbols in the walls as dread omens.



Use Explore the Wild to move about the fortress: each Trek will take them deeper in, through weapon magazines and launch hangers to storerooms and workshops, and eventually to computer cores and storage for high value items.

Fortress Guardian — Ground Threat

A strange automaton of steel and stone, this strange machine tends tirelessly to its decaying home, and watches the newcomers with interest.

Hunting Shotguns, 1 Thickness 3+ Armour, 2 Thickness 6+ Armour. Can be interacted with using Parlay with the Strange

As players explore, they may encounter one or two the fortress' automated Guardians. These robots will follow intruders about curiously, cleaning up after them if they leave anything behind, and will only attack if the pilots begin to damage the fortress. Pilots who work out how to communicate with them may find them extremely helpful, and perhaps even in need of aid fixing some part of the aging bastion.

Sky-Whales

The most awesome and strange of all of Himmilgard's creatures are the Sky Whales, massive creatures who float majestically and peacefully through the atmosphere.

Sky-Whales demonstrate considerable intelligence. Those who work with them know they are capable of distinguishing between friendly and hostile aircraft, and they can remember and recognize the livery of planes and airships they've interacted with before. Some even claim they remember faces, and many traders have heard stories of sky-whales coming to the rescue of stricken balloons or chasing off predators.

It is not surprising that the Sky-Whales are assigned a divine role in a great many mythologies. As is often the case, none of these tales can be substantiated in their entirety, but the evidence suggests that all these stories contain at least a grain of truth.

Biology

Sky-Whales are able to fly thanks to a combination of two unique adaptations: their ability to synthesize luftane, and the unique properties of their bones. Luftane, a gravity-defying acid, gives the whales their buoyancy, allowing them to soar high above the clouds.

Whalebone, however, defies casual explanation. This marvellous material outright rejects gravity and, when subject to tension, exerts thrust. This combination makes whalebone an ideal material for building super-lightweight planes, as well as a simple necessity for steerable sail-powered airships. The keels of most Skyborn ships are, to this day, constructed of whalebone harvested from underground graveyards.

Behaviour

Sky-Whales typically live in pods of four to ten individuals, though individuals and pairs have been spotted. They slowly migrate across the skies, following the jetstream to the best concentrations of aeroplankton.

They are most often seen near the coasts, but range across the continent. Whales rarely stray below four thousand meters, especially in the modern age, and are most commonly found at six kilometres altitude.

The only real defences that Sky-Whales have is their sheer bulk, but to be fair this does make them nearly invulnerable to most everything in the sky. Even whaling airships have trouble with full-sized adults, which can pull apart cranes, snap harpoon lines, or flip airships outright.

Sky-whales are only really vulnerable to predators at a young age, so pods usually arrange themselves around the calfs to protect them. Sky Screamers and whalers both target the young, and the survivors of the declined whale populations will fight fiercely to protect them.

Graveyards

One of the most notable behaviours of Sky-Whales is that very old, injured, or sick whales will often descend and make their way into the many massive cave systems of Himmilgard. Exactly what drives this behaviour is unknown, but the result is that caves across the continent will have ceilings littered with the floating bones of long-dead whales.

Whale graveyards are rare finds and usually quickly exploited due to the sheer value of the material. A map to a graveyard or a report of a dying whale can set dozens of companies on a chase to secure the resulting fortune, and entire battles were fought in the Great War over them.

Jagdlichter

During the later years of the Great War, pilots began to report seeing strange lights moving about the skies at night. They'd move in to investigate only to find the lights easily outrunning and outclimbing them. Worse, sometimes these lights turned aggressive, strafing across pursuit aircraft at impossible speeds, their superpowered weapons knocking pilots out of the sky in a single pass.

These mysterious objects soon became known as the Hunting Lights by pilots, who often suspected that they were experimental enemy aircraft or some kind of strange creatures. In the Royal Sopwith Flying Corps, it became commonly believed that they were Valkyries, waiting in the clouds as the world came to its end.

Most of these reports were dismissed as exaggerations or the confusion of exhausted pilots: who would believe that an aircraft could exceed five hundred kilometres an hour and climb more than fifteen metres a second?

The war may be over, but the Hunting Lights are still sometimes seen high over Himmilgard, especially in the aftermath of storms. Any pilot worth anything will tell you: if you see a strange yellow glow, keep a respectful distance. If it starts moving towards you, all you can do is pray.

Hunting Light — Air Threat

High above Himmilgard, the Hunting Lights watch all. Appearing most often at night after major storms, nobody knows their purpose, but it is known that any who disturb them will be targeted.

Max - Combat - Stall Speeds	Handling	Health
52 - 25 - 12	80	40
Blue Lances (9 Hits, 8 Damage, AP2, Rapid Fire) WEP: Can temporarily accelerate to 60 Speed.		

The Invaders

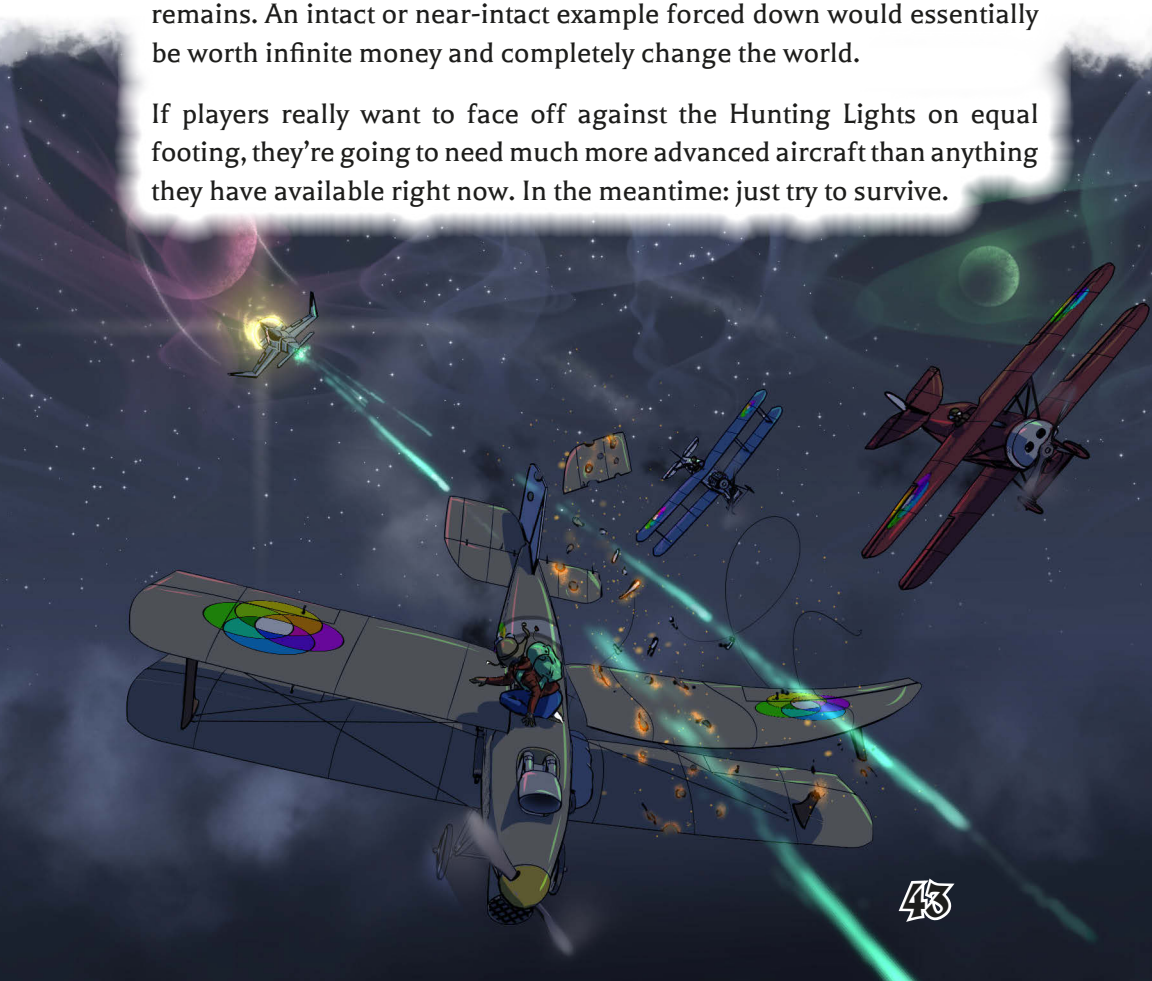
The Hunting Lights are a boss fight, seeing as they are aircraft with Second World War performance preying on a world of First World War aircraft. They are not peer opponents and should never be presented as such, they are legendary monsters like dragons or leviathans.

Just about the only advantages players will have over the Hunting Lights is higher Handling and lower Turn Bleed, which means that if it becomes a turning fight, they at least have slim odds of survival.

Otherwise, the Hunting Lights aren't something you fight, nor something you outrun, they're something you try and distract long enough to get away. Therefore, players should never be put in the position of having to battle them in equal numbers or as a regular foe, it should always be an unexpected factor injecting itself into another situation.

If players do somehow shoot down a Hunting Light, there's at least 50 thalers of strange technology and materials to be had in its crashed remains. An intact or near-intact example forced down would essentially be worth infinite money and completely change the world.

If players really want to face off against the Hunting Lights on equal footing, they're going to need much more advanced aircraft than anything they have available right now. In the meantime: just try to survive.



New Planes

This books comes with six new planes in a PDF file. You should be able to access these planes with the following link.

https://opensketch.itch.io/flying-circus-the-horror-of-the-heights

These planes are...

- Markgraf Totengräber A, a two seat fighter with a turbocharger.
- Kreuzer Spinnmilbe, a sleek rotary biplane with a supercharger.
- KW Dickhäuter, a two-engined heavy fighter.
- Mushshak Trainer, a high altitude two-seat trainer.
- Sonnenjäger Hummel, a lightly armed spy plane.
- Ritter Model ABh Eule, a night fighter and zeppelin hunter.

Modifying Planes

If you want to get an existing plane up to high altitude, you'll need to mess with the engine using the aircraft engineering program. Open the plane you want to modify, and scroll down to the "Engines" section. Take a note what engine your plane uses, then click the 'Engine Builder' link. There, find your engine in List Management, and scroll back up to the builder.

Here, you can modify your engine for higher altitude using a Compressor, under the upgrades tab. The three types available are Altitude Throttles, Superchargers, and Turbochargers.

- An Altitude Throttle will give you WEP at low altitude, and add 20 to your maximum altitude.
- A Supercharger will increase your maximum altitude and your engine power in exchange for higher mass, drag, and fuel use.
- A Turbocharger will do the same, but instead of increasing fuel consumption it will add a lot of bulk to your aircraft.

With all these, increase your Minimum IAF to increase your potential altitude. You can add more compressors to increase the range. Save the engine with a new name, then go back and select the new engine.

As a rule of thumb, an altitude throttle is best for small, light planes that want to stay nimble, a supercharger is best for extremely fast planes who want more speed, and a turbocharger is best for larger planes like bombers and observers that care about endurance.